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THE
WHOLE PROCEEDINGS
AND
RESOLUTIONS

OF THE
Freeholders of the County of Middlesex,

At a MEETING PUBLICLY CONVENED and held

BY THE

HIGH SHERIFF, at HACKNEY,

On WEDNESDAY, OCT. 29, 1800,

Where it was UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED, that the

WAR IS THE CAUSE

OF THE

Alarming High Price of Provisions,
&c. &c. &c.

ALSO

A very interesting Debate on the Parliamentary Conduct of

Mr. BYNG and Mr. MAINWARING,

The present Representatives of the County.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

The Prospect of Famine,

CLEARLY DEMONSTRATED

BY HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF PORTLAND,

In his LETTERS to Mr. WAKEFIELD, MAYOR of NOTTINGHAM,
and the LORD LIEUTENANT of the COUNTY of OXFORD.

L O N D O N:

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Freeholders of the County of Middlesex.

AT A MEETING HOLDEN AT HACKNEY, ON
WEDNESDAY THE 29TH OF OCTOBER, 1800,
FOR THE PURPOSE OF TAKING INTO CON-
SIDERATION THE CAUSE OF THE ALARM-
ING HIGH PRICE OF PROVISIONS.

AT one o'clock the Sheriffs took the chair,
when Mr. Sheriff Perring opened the
business by stating, that he and his colleague had
convened that meeting in consequence of a re-
quisition signed by several respectable Freeholders,
which he read, and is to the following effect, *viz.*

“ To summon a Meeting of the Freeholders
“ of the County to consider the propriety of pre-
“ senting a petition to Parliament, to entreat it
“ to investigate the Causes of the High Price
“ of Provisions and to effectuate their Re-
“ duction.”

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Mr,

Mr. Sheriff PERRING then asked, if any gentleman present had any thing to offer on the subject, and no person coming forward, the Sheriff was proceeding to call over the names of those who signed the requisition, when

Mr. JOHN WILKES entered the room, and addressed the meeting to the following purport :— He acknowledged he was one of those who signed the requisition, but he expected another gentleman would have brought forward the business before the present respectable Meeting—that gentleman however having been prevented from attending, he was so sensible of the importance of the subject, and that the sense of the county of Middlesex could not be too soon expressed on it, that he would, though not accustomed to address a public meeting, crave their attention to a few sentiments he had to offer on the subject in support of the Resolutions and Petition which he should have the honour to submit to the consideration of the Meeting. The evils, he said, which were consequent on the present enormous price of every necessary of life, were too well, and too universally known and felt, to need more than a bare mention. The chief points to which the thoughts of the Meeting, and of Parliament, should be directed, were the causes of such high prices, and the consequences likely to result from them. The present evil fell with peculiar weight and oppression on the middling classes of the community, who, from the vast increase of taxes, particularly Poor's Rates, were not only deprived of most of the comforts they had been usually able to afford themselves and families, but what was more to be lamented, they seemed to be all in a direct road to immediate ruin, and if something was not speedily done to avert the mischief, the middle classes of the community must soon become themselves

so many additional burdens on their several parishes. This was a matter of most serious and important consideration; but great as it was, it was still necessary to attend to a still greater mass of unfortunate sufferers by the present calamitous situation of the country; he meant to allude to the miseries of the poor orders of society, in the canvassing of which he was afraid they would hourly meet with tales of horror, sufficient to agonize every feeling mind. Various were the causes assigned by different persons as giving rise to the evils which now so lamentably predominated. Some were of opinion that there was not sufficient encouragement given to the growth of corn to ensure a sufficient quantity for the consumption of the country; others attributed them to the immense increase of the paper currency of the country, which, by its tendency to depreciate the value of money, naturally enhanced the price of every commodity; others again, were of opinion, that the continuance of the War was the chief cause of the present distresses. For his own part, he said, he was of opinion that all these causes had their share in operating the dreadful mischiefs with which we were at present so unfortunately surrounded; and he feared that, in addition to these, might be placed the wickedness of men who, availing themselves of all those previous circumstances, threw themselves forward to counteract the bountiful dispensations of Providence, and made use of the wealth with which it had blessed them, to operate by their nefarious transactions, first the misery, and in the end destruction of their less fortunate fellow-creatures. Whatever might really be the cause or causes, he would not presume decisively to say; certain it was, that the evil too palpably existed for any one to deny. It therefore became highly incumbent on every one who

had any regard for his fellow-creatures, or love for his country, to consider seriously what were the consequences likely to result from it. It was, he said, the opinion of the most celebrated political writers, that any country must be running rapidly to decay, where the middling classes of the people are gradually destroyed. There was, alas! but too much reason to dread this must soon be the case in this country. History, from one end to the other, evinced that almost all violent revolutions have been preceded by either real or artificial scarcity. He particularly alluded to the late revolution in France, and said, that in his opinion if it had not been for the scarcity, real or artificial, which preceded it, Louis the XVIth would, at this hour, have been on the throne of his ancestors. If, therefore, said he, these evils really exist, and if these consequences have always resulted from them, it certainly becomes necessary to take the most speedy and effectual measures to prevent them. Therefore he would not take up more of the time of the Meeting, but would content himself with submitting the following resolutions to the consideration of the Meeting, *viz.*

I. " That the excessive dearness of Provision, is attended with much inconvenience to the middling Classes of Society, and crushes the industrious Poor with distress which they cannot support."

II. " That a continuance of the high prices of the Necessaries of Life, must either increase the Price of Labour, or the Rates for the Poor must injure the National Commerce; diminish the Public Revenue, and create general Discontent."

III. " That the deep-rooted and extensive Causes of this dangerous Evil, cannot be destroyed

stroyed but by the Legislative interference :—
And, that the adoption of palliative Regulations
and temporary Remedies only, will give vigour to
its growth and permanence to its duration.”

IV. “ That a Petition shall therefore be presented from this County to Parliament, intreating its immediate attention to the subject, and the introduction of such measures as shall afford not only immediate but permanent Relief.”

These resolutions were severally read and put by Mr. Sheriff Perring, and unanimously agreed to.

Mr. CLIFFORD then arose and lamented the absence of Mr. Byng, who, he said, was detained by sickness: he paid a very handsome compliment to the last Speaker for the very candid and judicious manner in which he had brought forward his resolutions, all of which, he said, were good as far as they went, but they did not go far enough. *Why not state that the continuance of the war was the real cause? That was certainly the fact, and the people ought to assert it boldly.* Before the war wheat was at 9s. the bushel, and the whole of the annual taxes amounted only to 16 millions :—by this infamous war the permanent taxes are become increased to double the above sum, and *the yearly expenditure in carrying it on amounts to sixty-three millions.* These were facts which were ascertained beyond a possibility of doubt, therefore he would move for another Resolution, *viz.*

“ That the *Principle Cause of the present Distress*
“ *is the War in which we are engaged,* and that our
“ Representatives be instructed to vote against
“ its continuation on every occasion.”

Which

Which being seconded by Mr. Luke Hodgson, the resolution was read and put by the Sheriff, and unanimously agreed to.

Mr. Alderman SKINNER said, he could not suffer the Meeting to break up without saying a few words on the subject of Mr. Byng's absence, which was occasioned by his being from home, in a distant country, and also very much indisposed. The notice of the Meeting had also been so short, that had he not been ill, he could scarcely have got there in time. He was, however, so well acquainted with that honourable Member's sentiments, that he could venture to pledge himself nothing else could have prevented him from being present, and that he would cheerfully acquiesce in every sentiment expressed by his constituents on the present occasion. He thought it necessary to say thus much, in order to prevent any insidious reports getting into circulation relative to the absence of one of their Members on such an occasion, especially so near to a general election, such attempts were but too probable.

Mr. WILKES then brought forward a Petition to Parliament, which he begged leave to read, and submit to the consideration of the Meeting; the purport of which was, "That the distresses of the poor were arrived to so *alarming* a height as to require the most serious consideration and speedy redress; and entreating Parliament to adopt such measures as may seem to them best calculated to ensure a speedy relief, and to prevent a return of the evils complained of."

This Petition was unanimously agreed to.

Mr. Alderman SKINNER then moved the thanks of the Meeting to Mr. Wilkes for the very temperate, modest, yet manly manner in which
he

he had introduced, and moved his resolutions, which was unanimously agreed to.

Mr. CLIFFORD expressed his surprise that when a resolution to instruct the Members of the county to vote against the War, had been moved and carried, one of those Members should be present, and yet remain entirely silent as to the effect of that resolution on his mind.

Mr. MAINWARING said, that he had come to the Meeting fully impressed with the importance of the subject on which it was called, and had given every attention to what had passed in it. With regard to the resolution relative to the War, it should ever be his determination to acquiesce in the sentiments of his constituents to the utmost of his power—and he would cheerfully concur with his Honourable Colleague in presenting the Petition which had been voted. As to the War, no man could feel more for the distresses occasioned by it than he did—he sincerely wished for Peace, and would do every thing in his power to bring about that happy and desirable event. Had not the last speaker mentioned his surprise at his silence he should not have suffered the Meeting to break up without saying a few words on the subject, though he was somewhat doubtful how far, in point of delicacy, he could venture to go into the policy of the question, not being willing to hazard the slightest interruption of the unanimity of the Meeting.

Mr. MACNAMARA then moved the thanks of the Meeting to Mr. Mainwaring, for the handsome manner in which he had expressed his sentiments on the present important occasion ; which was unanimously agreed to.

Mr. Alderman SKINNER then said, that as Mr. Byng was so unfortunately prevented by indisposition from taking a part in the meeting, and
thereby

thereby of receiving that tribute of thanks which he was certain his conduct would have called forth had he been present—moved, “That the “ thanks of the meeting be given to Mr. Byng, “ for his *general* conduct in Parliament.” This motion was seconded by Mr. Wilkes, and on being put by the Sheriff, was unanimously agreed to.

A motion was then made and seconded, to adjourn the meeting, but before the question was put

Mr. MACNAMARA wished to have leave to make an amendment in his vote of thanks to Mr. Mainwaring, by inserting the words, “*for his general conduct in Parliament,*” previous to, “for the handsome manner in which, &c.” for which purpose he moved the previous question on the question of adjournment, which was put and carried.

Mr. Macnamara then said, that his reason for wishing to insert the words contained in his amendment was, that a vote of thanks to Mr. Byng, who was *not present*, for his *general* conduct, seemed to him to imply an indirect censure on Mr. Mainwaring, who *was present*, for his general conduct. He thought this was what he by no means deserved, and he hoped therefore his amendment would be unanimously agreed to,

Mr. MOORE said, that having considerable property in the county, he came to this Meeting only to observe what might be going forward, without meaning to take any part in the proceedings of the day, because he had no intimation of what their import might be, further than the advertisement in the public papers; and that hitherto he had silently witnessed all the resolutions passed, *even that of Thanks to the Honourable Gentleman, Mr. Mainwaring, for his conduct this day.*

day.—Mr. Moore said, he entertained an high sense of that gentleman's private character ; and perhaps few of his friends now present felt more liberality towards him than he did, though personally unknown :—thus far, Mr. Moore said, he had gone with the Meeting, and agreed *sub silentio* to the Vote of Thanks to Mr. Mainwaring, for which his reasons were, that he considered the Honourable Representative's declaration to the Meeting as an *abandonment of his past political conduct*; and that henceforth the County might consider him as *a sincere convert* to the necessity of an *opposite course*. But when he saw a Vote of Thanks moved to be given to the Honourable Gentleman for his *general* conduct, as one of the Representatives of this County, because it had been unanimously voted to Mr. Byng, he was influenced to break his intended silence to oppose it ; clear as it must be, that if the whole tenor of their proceedings this day be not incorrect ; if they were well founded in their unanimous resolve, that the War is the general cause of the present dearness of provisions : (and he did not hesitate to confess that he was one of those who unreservedly subscribed to that opinion) In their votes of thanks, they could not possibly put Mr. Byng and Mr. Mainwaring on the same footing, because on this subject Mr. Byng, to his eternal honour, had uniformly and in every stage, opposed it, while Mr. Mainwaring had as uniformly and in every stage supported the War. They could not therefore alike thank both these Gentlemen for their *general* conduct ; they could not, said Mr. Moore, deplore and reprobate the causes of calamity, and at the same time applaud and approve the conduct of the authors of it ; that, he trusted, was an inconsistency which could not attach to the

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county of Middlesex ; and he trusted the honourable mover would not attempt to rob—(what he was pleased to say might prove the favour of the country, by inducing other counties to follow the example)—this meeting of its first attribute, its very soul, *viz.* its character for consistency and dignity. I am not the advocate, said Mr. Moore, of *men*.—It has been the study and pursuit of my life to look at principles and things only, and not to attach myself to men but as they may be attached to principles and things :—that it was wholly immaterial to him whether the county of Middlesex was represented by Mr. Byng and Mr. Mainwaring, or any other persons ; he considered all Representatives alike, as trustees of the people, only, accountable for their trusts. But when he was to judge how far they had discharged their respective trusts, he must weigh their conduct by principles, on their own respective merits. In this light, said Mr. Moore, I cannot then, alike thank the two Members for *general* conduct, which has been East and West of each other. Mr. Byng has opposed the War—Mr. Mainwaring has supported it. They cannot have been both right—Who then has been right ? We are told by the calamities we now deplore. On this ground, then, said Mr. Moore, Mr. Byng had his most cordial thanks for his *general* conduct—it was due to his merit, inasmuch as his delegation had been exercised, as far as depended on him, to keep us free of the War, and the great calamities we now feel and deplore as some of the dreadful effects of it ; on the other hand, Mr. Mainwaring had steered an opposite course, and as far as depended on him, contributed to involve us in all the present unparalleled difficulties, this late opulent and happy nation is reduced to struggle with.—How then, said Mr. Moore,

Moore, could he vote for the same thanks to Mr. Mainwaring for *general* conduct, which had been given to Mr. Byng? Such a vote of thanks, said he, would imply approbation of his conduct: if he did, no one could believe, but that he gloried in his country's calamity. He could not make such a sacrifice of truth—was there any Gentleman present who could? He did not believe there was, and hoped the motion would be withdrawn, as he would oppose it to the last moment of the Meeting. Perhaps, said Mr. Moore, these observations may be more applicable at a new election: It might be so, and he hoped they would not be forgotten then, in any part of the kingdom. It was very natural and very proper when a trustee applied to have his commission renewed, that he should first be examined how he had discharged his past trust. On a new election, said Mr. Moore, he hoped this would be made a general rule.

To the motion for particular thanks to the honourable Representative of this county (Mr. Mainwaring) for his conduct *this* day, Mr. Moore said, he had no objection: but he would most strenuously arraign any motion of thanks for his *general* conduct; and he hoped and trusted the Meeting would reprobate any such motion. Mr. Moore begged pardon for saying so much (every syllable of it more than he intended), and begged leave again to assure them, that he did not come forward as an advocate for MEN, but as a sincere advocate for the honour and character of the County of Middlesex, which stood high in the opinion of the nation; and he hoped and trusted nothing done at this Meeting would lessen it. He hoped they would not mark its character for inconsistency and frivolity, and thereby render abortive not only the whole of this day's proceedings,

but those of all future Meetings. This they would do if they put the *general* conduct of Mr. Byng and Mr. Mainwaring on the same footing, and thenceforward deprive the County of all that respect, dignity of character and influence, which it had uniformly commanded in the political scale of the nation, no matter who the Minister of the Country.

Mr. CLIFFORD, in a very animated manner, expressed himself of the same opinion with Mr. Moore, and assured Mr. Macnamara, that if he persisted in his amendment, he would divide the Meeting on it.

Mr. MACNAMARA then said, that if Mr. Alderman Skinner would withdraw his motion of general thanks, he would also withdraw the whole of his motion.

Mr. Alderman SKINNER was somewhat indignant at this. He said he had moved the vote of thanks for the purpose of shewing the Meeting the real cause of Mr. Byng's absence, and that no base impressions might be made to his prejudice on the eve perhaps of a general election. As to the two votes being withdrawn, he was certain his Honourable Friend would be sorry to have his name coupled on such an occasion with that of the Honourable Member. With regard, however, to what Mr. Macnamara had said to the thanks of the Meeting for Mr. Byng's general conduct, being an indirect censure on that of Mr. Mainwaring, he did not conceive that it was so, and he assured the Meeting he had no intention whatever to hurt in the slightest manner the feelings of that Honourable Member, for whose private character he had the highest respect.

Mr. MAINWARING expressed his concern that he should have been the cause of any altercation, or that any thing relative to him, individually, should

should have taken up so much of the time of the Meeting. He had no power to withdraw or to alter the present motion; all he could say was, that it did not originate with him, nor was he any way privy to it.

Mr. MACNAMARA then said, that though he was persuaded there were as many Freeholders in the County who approved Mr. Mainwaring's general conduct, as there were that of his Colleague, rather than be the means of interrupting the harmony and unanimity of the Meeting, he would withdraw his amendment.—The original motion was then put again, and unanimously agreed to.

Several motions having been put and carried, subsequent to the vote of thanks to the Sheriffs, for the prompt alacrity with which they had convened the Meeting, and their impartial and attentive conduct on the present important occasion—a question arose, whether the motion of thanks should stand subsequent to the other business, and some discussion took place on this point. Mr. Moore closed the debate by observing, that it was self evident the thanks to the Sheriffs should follow all the rest, inasmuch as their justice, impartiality, and patience had been subjected to severer trials for the last half hour, than all the rest of the day.

The motion of thanks was put again, and again carried unanimously; so as to make it stand in its proper place.

Before the Meeting was adjourned it was resolved unanimously, that all the resolutions be signed by the Sheriffs and published, which are as follows, viz,

MIDDLESEX.

MIDDLESEX.

At a MEETING of the FREEHOLDERS of the COUNTY of MIDDLESEX, holden at the Mermaid, at Hackney, on Wednesday the 29th day of October, 1800, in consequence of a Requisition delivered to the Sheriffs, signed by several Freeholders, requesting them “ to summon a Meeting of the Freeholders of the County, to consider the propriety of presenting a Petition to Parliament, to entreat it to investigate the Causes of the High Price of Provision, and to effectuate their reduction,” —

Resolved Unanimously, That the excessive dearth of Provision, is attended with much inconvenience to the middling Classes of Society, and crushes the industrious Poor with distress which they cannot support.

Resolved Unanimously, That a continuance of the high Prices of the Necessaries of Life, must either increase the Price of Labour, or the Rates for the Poor must injure the National Commerce; diminish the Public Revenue, and create general Discontent.

Resolved Unanimously, That the deep-rooted and extensive Causes of this dangerous Evil, cannot be destroyed, but by Legislative interference: — And, that the adoption of palliative Regulations and temporary Remedies only, will give vigour to its growth and permanence to its duration.

Resolved Unanimously, That a Petition shall therefore be presented from this County to Parliament, intreating its immediate attention to the subject, and the introduction of such Measures as shall afford not only immediate but permanent Relief.

Resolved Unanimously, That the principle Cause of the present Distress is the War in which we are engaged, and that our Representatives be instructed

instructed to vote against its continuance on every opportunity in Parliament.

A Petition to the House of Commons having been This Day proposed and approved,

Resolved Unanimously, That the Sheriffs be requested to sign; and the Representatives for the County to present and support the same.

Resolved Unanimously, That the Thanks of this Meeting be given to William Mainwaring, Esq. our worthy Member, for the able, handsome and explicit manner in which he has expressed himself relative to the instructions of this Meeting, upon this important occasion.

Resolved Unanimously, That this Meeting regret the unavoidable absence of George Byng, Esq. their other worthy Member, and present him their thanks for his general conduct, as their Representative in Parliament.

Resolved Unanimously, That these Resolutions be published in all the Morning and Evening Papers, signed by the Sheriffs.

JOHN PERRING, }
THOMAS CADELL, } Sheriffs.

Resolved Unanimously, That the thanks of the County be presented to the Sheriffs, for their prompt and polite attention to the requisition of the Freeholders, and for their judicious and impartial conduct on the present occasion.

[The present exorbitant price of Provisions must be extremely alarming to the community, particularly when such appearance of scarcity prevails at the very close of the harvest, which should seriously arouse the people to a sense of their danger, and induce them to use every legal means to ward off the impending calamity.—To those who doubt the real scarcity of provisions, let them attentively peruse the two following Letters, written by his Grace the Duke of Portland, wherein the prospect of Famine is clearly demonstrated.]

A COPY of a LETTER from the DUKE of PORTLAND to the LORD LIEUTENANT of the COUNTY of OXFORD. DATED WHITEHALL, SEPT. 29, 1800.

My Lord,

I have had the honour to receive your Grace's letter of the 25th instant, and am very glad to find that the disposition to riot at Witney has been suppressed, and that all is quiet there for the present. I cannot, however, advert to the cause to which your Grace is of opinion that this event may be ascribed, and to the consequences which you may seem to think would follow the removal of the troops which have been sent into Oxfordshire, without participating in your apprehensions, so far as to assure your Grace that none of them will be withdrawn until you are entirely satisfied that no part either of the County or City of Oxford is any longer exposed to the risk of suffering from the effect of popular tumult. But notwithstanding these precautions, and all the extent of the military and civil power which is now placed at your Grace's disposal, considering the state of the county, your Grace will give me leave to represent to you the necessity, which I am persuaded there must be, for the exertion of all your great influence and authority to combat and counteract the prejudices which have operated no less powerfully than unfortunately, in disposing a very large part of the community to believe that the late scarcity was artificial, and has been owing to the views and speculations of certain interested and rapacious men, who take advantage of the difficulties and distresses of the
times,

times, to enrich themselves at the expence of the public.

Your Grace need not be reminded of the circumstances of the last year's harvest, and of the unfavourable state of the ground at the time of sowing wheat, to account for the dearth of that article, and indeed of every other sort of grain, and of all provisions in general; and although the quantity of corn which has been imported, has far exceeded the most sanguine expectations, neither in that respect, nor in quality, does it, or can it ever, compensate the deficiency which was, and will be occasioned by such a season as that of last year; nor would it have the effect which must be hoped to be derived from it; was it to be brought without reserve to market, in the same quantities in which it is landed; for, from the best information that can be obtained, of the state of this year's crop throughout the kingdom; I am sorry to say that, according to the most sanguine estimation, the produce of it is not likely to amount to more than three-fourths of an average crop, and it is thought by many that it will not exceed three-fifths. But be the amount what it may, it is, I fear, but too well ascertained, that the whole produce of the grain in the best of years, is not equal to the annual consumption of the country.

I need not ask your Grace what must be the consequence of suffering the doctrines which have of late been so unhappily received against the growers of corn, and dealers in that commodity to prevail, or of their not being discountenanced by every possible means that can be employed for that purpose; and it must be too evident, that it is indispensably necessary, without loss of time, or being influenced by any other consider-

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ation

ation to counteract and expose the folly and injustice of this false policy, to which is to be attributed the assumption of a right to set prices on commodities brought to market, of fixing a maximum for the articles of daily consumption, of entering into associations (which is much the same thing) not to give more than a certain price for any of those articles ; of obliging the growers of corn, or dealers in other articles of provision, to sell at a given price, and what is worst of all, going in bands to the houses of farmers, and forcing them by threats, and various other modes of intimidation, to enter into engagements to bring and dispose of their commodities at a given price ; a proceeding, which I cannot advert to without urging your Grace to prosecute without distinction, all persons concerned in it in the most vigorous, exemplary, and impressive manner, which the power, military as well as civil, under your command, will most speedily and effectually enable you do. It would be an unreasonable abuse of your Grace's time, to enumerate the evils which must unavoidably result from a continuance of the proceedings which I have taken the liberty of pointing out to you, as requiring to be immediately suppressed. But if any thing could contribute to realize the absurd notion of corn being destroyed for the purpose of keeping up the price of it, this would be more likely to effect it than any other mode that could be adopted, as the life of a person possessed of corn, or any other article of provision, is rendered no less insecure than his property, and it would consequently tend, as all other acts of violence do, to the concealment, much more than the production of the commodity ; the consequence of which must be obvious in the injury resulting to landed property, by discouraging tillage and every

every sort of agriculture, and by locking up, or diverting into another channel, that capital which is perhaps more beneficially employed in the improvement of land than in any other mode—it would so impede and obstruct the great source and means of the daily supplies of the country, that famine would soon be substituted in the place of scarcity, and that distress and confusion would soon ensue, which would debilitate its inhabitants, and enervate all its powers more fatally than any calamity with which it has been visited for centuries, or than is to be met with in the annals of its history. If the employment of property is not secure; if every man does not feel that he has power to retain what he possesses as long as he pleases, and dispose of it at the time, in the manner, and for the price he chuses to fix upon it, there must be an end of confidence, of industry, and of all valuable and virtuous exertions of every description; for there is no reason why a price may not be paid on the works of the handicraftsman, mechanic, or artist, as well as upon those of the farmer, grazier, gardener, &c.—and thus the whole order of things would be overturned and destroyed; your Grace, therefore will, I hope, excuse the earnestness with which I address myself to you to resist these attempts in their outset, and to maintain the principle of perfect freedom of property, upon which the prosperity of this country rests, and by which it has risen, under Providence, to the extraordinary state of wealth and power which it now enjoys.

If this conclusion is as well founded as I believe it to be, the necessity of the protection I recommend cannot be disputed; and I am persuaded your Grace will admit and feel the occasion to be worthy the exertion of the influence I solicit.

I solicit. The people will be made sensible that their own interest, as well as the law, requires that the market should be free and open, and that every man should dispose of what he brings there at his own price, or be at liberty to withhold it, unless he is satisfied with what is offered him for it; and the person who brings his commodities to market, will go there with that confidence which can alone secure his attendance at it.

I cannot but be fearful that I have trespassed very unreasonably upon your Grace's time; but the situation in which I have the honour of standing, having brought before me the details of all the disturbances and outrages occasioned by the pressure of the times, and the opinions against which I have remonstrated, it may be possibly, that I may be more alive to the tendency of their effects than those who contemplate them at a greater distance, and more at their ease; but when I find reason to infer that your Grace entertained apprehensions not much inferior to those which I have described, I may, I think, refer myself to your candour, to excuse the liberty I have taken in opening my mind so fully upon a subject, in my conclusions on which I shall feel myself as fully justified by your concurrence, as by the use you will make of your influence and power in restoring and securing the tranquillity and good order of the country, and that confidence which is as essential to the transactions of individuals, as to those of a public nature.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most obedient

humble servant,

PORTLAND.

COPY

COPY of a LETTER from his GRACE the DUKE
of PORTLAND to Mr. WAKEFIELD, MAYOR
of NOTTINGHAM. DATED OCT. 7, 1800.

Sir,

I have received your Letter of the 27th of September; in which was inclosed the Copy of an Agreement entered into by some very respectable Gentleman of the Town of Nottingham, with the sums set opposite to their names, to the amount of which they have respectively engaged to indemnify a Committee, selected for the purpose of purchasing Foreign Corn, for increasing the supply of the Nottingham Market. I very much approve the substance of that agreement, and am very willing to enter into it, and support it, by engaging to advance, upon the same terms as they have done, the sum of 300l. but upon the express condition, however, that the Corn so bought is not offered to sale at a less price than the same cost, with the additional expence of carriage, unless the price of other Corn falls, and in which case this Corn should be sold at a price proportioned to its comparative value with that of other Corn brought into the Market, and I make this an indispensable condition of my subscription, because I am confident that the scarcity is not fictitious; that this year's crop, when it is threshed out and brought regularly to market, must be managed and husbanded; and that those who can afford to submit to privations, must give up the use of as much of it as they can, and avoid any consumption of it which can be dispensed with; that instead of forcing the farmer or dealer by intimidation, or what will be termed shaming him to bring his Corn to market, he must be encouraged to it by a confidence in the security of his property and person; that great has the importation of foreign corn already been, and is still

still likely to be beyond all precedent, it is not sufficient to supply the Markets, and ought not to be suffered to do it to the exclusion of the Grain of our own growth, which must necessarily be better and more valuable; that it is extremely unwise and dangerous to tempt the people to indulge themselves beyond what the stock in hand can afford them the means of doing, and to buoy them up with hopes of plenty in which they must be disappointed at a time when the severity of the season will render them less able to contend with the difficulties of their situation, and no less impolitic than unjust to encourage them to consider the farmer as their enemy and the person who prays upon their necessities. For these reasons, and for many more with which I do not trouble the Gentlemen, and which I know will suggest themselves more readily to them than to me, I protest against selling this foreign or any other Corn that may be brought for the supply of the market, upon lower terms than those I have pointed out, and which I make the express condition of my subscription. I cannot conclude this letter without expressing my wish that the word *exorbitant* had not appeared in the preamble of the agreement, and that it could now be erased, and any such epithet, as *high, very high, unusually high*, or any other of the like import be substituted in its room, which could not be construed to convey any opinion which should countenance the prejudices of the people, or keep alive the apprehensions of the growers and dealers in corn, or any other article of provision.

I am, &c.

PORTLAND.



F I N I S.